

These immigration programs would take millions of people out of the shadows and allow them to work and pay taxes.

Today also happens to be the third anniversary of the Senate passing a bipartisan bill to fix our Nation's immigration system by a heavy vote of 68 to 32. It was bipartisan in nature.

Three years ago, after the bill passed in the Senate, Republicans used their obstructionist ways to prevent a vote in the House of Representatives. Today, those same Republicans are obstructing a ninth Supreme Court Justice in order to kill the President's Executive actions on immigration.

Latino and immigrant families across this Nation are watching who stands with them and who stands against them. It is very easy to see. It is appalling Republicans are willing to prevent the Court from doing its job as they wait for a Donald Trump-appointed nominee. That is startling.

Just yesterday, the Republican leader refused to say if he thinks Donald Trump is qualified to be President. His silence speaks volumes.

Republicans continue to block our justice system from functioning so this unqualified bigot can reshape the Supreme Court in his image.

It is time for Republicans to stop fomenting partisanship and gridlock, even in the Nation's highest Court. America deserves a fully functioning Supreme Court.

#### MINERS PROTECTION ACT AND FLOODING IN WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. REID. Madam President, just last month, we marked the 70th anniversary of President Truman's historic promise to mine workers. President Truman promised lifetime health and pension benefits to coal miners in exchange for their continuing the back-breaking work which built our Nation, but today tens of thousands of miners and widows are in imminent danger of losing not part of their health benefits but all of them—100 percent of them. Their modest pension benefits are also at serious risk. A promise that has been kept for 70 years is about to be violated, broken. We shouldn't let that happen.

There is a bipartisan solution that would avert this crisis. Senator MANCHIN wants the Senate to vote on his Miners Protection Act, and so do I.

If it is up to Senator MCCONNELL, we are not going to be given a chance to vote before the recess, despite the gravity of the situation.

Just 2 weeks ago, more than 3,000 miners and their supporters rallied in Lexington, KY, urging congressional action. The Senate should vote on the Miners Protection Act before we recess for the political conventions that will be held this summer.

A promise made by President Truman is a promise we should keep because a promise made should be a promise kept.

Madam President, as we work to help these families, we should not forget the many West Virginians who are fighting the devastating flooding that has ravaged that State. Twenty-five have died. Our hearts go out to the victims and the families of those affected by the devastation.

I have spoken several times to the senior Senator from West Virginia. It is hard to comprehend, in that sparsely populated State, that a storm can take 25 people—men, women, and children—and still there are people unaccounted for.

On behalf of the whole Senate, I express the care and feeling we have for West Virginia. I want to be available to do everything I can to help the people of West Virginia. Senator MANCHIN is a great advocate, and we will listen closely to follow his direction and guidance.

We also thank the many brave police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and members of the National Guard who worked hard to prevent further loss of life. Many more people came close to dying. We have seen it all on television. We have read the stories. It is very frightening that something like that could happen.

I was told by Senator MANCHIN this is a 1,000-year storm—not a 100-year storm but a 1,000-year storm. Nothing like this has never happened before—9 inches of rain in just a matter of hours. It is devastating for the people of West Virginia but also for our country.

Will the Chair please announce the business of the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from West Virginia.

#### FLOODING IN WEST VIRGINIA AND MINERS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, first, I thank Senator REID and all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the compassion and the outpouring of love they have given to our State. They have expressed that to me. I also thank Senator REID and my Democratic colleagues for their commitment to the Miners Protection Act. I also thank Senator CAPITO, my colleague and counterpart in the Senate. She is committed to working on that.

There is a promise that was made, and basically the miners kept their promise. By their hard work, they have kept the country supplied with energy that has been needed. These are mostly

the widows who are depending on these pensions—they are modest pensions—but basically it is their health care. They will get a 90-day notice July 15 if we do nothing, and we cannot do that. We cannot do that to any part of this great country and especially those who have worked so hard and given so much.

I thank him for that commitment. I hope my colleagues, all of my colleagues, my Republican and Democratic colleagues, will help me keep this commitment and this promise to our miners.

Madam President, I wish to tell you a little bit about what is going on in my State of West Virginia. I came back last night.

I was driving home Thursday night, and I got caught in Virginia driving on I-81. This deluge of water started. Rains I have never seen before started while I was on I-81. After getting into Lexington, VA, I cross over to I-64 to come in. Then from I-64 I go through Clifton Forge and Covington. I have traveled quite a bit that way, and I have never seen water like this.

The river started coming across the road. We were able to get through that. I was asked what my first impression was coming into West Virginia. I was driving, and we came into West Virginia on the Greenbrier County side and White Sulfur Springs. The beautiful Greenbrier is there as soon as you come into our State.

The exit where you get off where you go to the Greenbrier and go into White Sulfur Springs, I looked down, and it was totally under water—all those stores where I used to stop, see people, and the little filling stations, but the eeriest thing I ever saw in my life was all these cars were under water and their lights were on. So you know if their lights were on, someone was driving. For the water to come up that quickly that you couldn't even turn your car off, you just jumped out or tried to swim out or tried to get out the best you could, that totally gives you an idea of how fast this river rose. No one has ever seen anything like it. Then I saw a trailer, a person's home, floating down the road, the middle of the road. I am thinking, "What happened?"

Then I drove and got into Charleston, and as Senator REID said, 9 inches. We had up to 10 inches of rain in some parts, 9 inches to 10 inches in this area of southeastern West Virginia that really got hit. All of the counties got hit pretty good, but a few of them really got inundated.

If you can imagine 9 inches to 10 inches of rain happening within a 2-hour to 6-hour period, that would be almost like turning on all the hoses you have in your house, put them in the house, turn them on full force, and let them run for that period of time and see what happens. It is just unbelievable.

Of the things we saw, first, people didn't have insurance because they

didn't think they were in the flood plain. Next, people who were in the flood plain couldn't afford the insurance. Next, most of our State—the hills and the beautiful mountains we have, over the years most of the people—the last 100 years or 200 years—have built in the valleys because that is where the river had meandered and kind of cut out the flat, level places. They are asking: Why would they build? I mean, this is where they have always been.

Over the years, they have either dredged the rivers, they have done different things, they built floodwalls. We build dams to hold back the water in certain areas, which has helped tremendously. Now we have to rethink how we do this. We need the Army Corps of Engineers. We need the Federal Government.

I thank President Obama and his Chief of Staff, Denis McDonough. I called Denis, and I said: Denis, if we have ever needed help, we need it now.

He said: Senator, I can assure you the President is ready to help as quickly as you put your declaration in.

Never have we had a declaration signed and turned around. I thank the President, I thank Denis, and the entire White House staff for the compassion they have had for my State and all the people of our State—as hard as it has been hit.

We have three counties with a declaration: Nicholas, Kanawha, and Greenbrier—which was really hit hard, which is where the Greenbrier Resort is. Those counties are getting immediate relief. We have 500—going to 700—National Guardsmen coming in.

I flew over the area. I visited all the areas by car on Friday. I flew over on Saturday. I have never seen an entire town, an entire city, inundated with water, the entire town. In Rainhill, WV, there wasn't a dry spot in the town so everybody got caught.

Somebody asked about the warning. We did give warning. There is never—if you have lived all your life, your parents and grandparents before you, and you heard stories about water coming this fast and this quick—let me give you one example, and you can imagine. I went to White Sulfur Springs yesterday in the little town—you have seen the pictures on television, the house that was floating and on fire. I was there, right where it happened.

Before I got to that house, I was walking down, and there was a lady standing there. There were foundations of a few homes, but there was no sign of a home anywhere. She had flowers and a cross. And that was where her husband, who was a grandfather, and her—but her husband, her daughter, and two grandchildren were in the house. They got clear to the attic, and the house left. One of the kids was safe, but one little child, the mother of the children—their daughter—and the grandfather were lost in the flood. She was standing there and looking.

What do you say? There are no words to replace that. You see these types of tragedies.

Then I walked across the bridge. This gentleman came and got me he said: Come on, JOE. I want you to come over and see. I walked up across the bridge where another—not large—stream comes out of the mountains, but it had become a raging river. That is where the forks basically join. When what happens, sometimes the hydrology will back up, and it creates a dam. The water creates a dam of itself.

I walked in there, and it looked like a bomb had gone off. There were three or four homes completely burning that had exploded. He lived in one of them. He said, when this all hit, the water, he ran as quickly as he could with his wife. He hid up in a cave on the hillside. They thought everybody had gotten out. A lady did get out, and she came back into the home.

Well, when the houses shifted, it broke the gas line. When the gaslines broke, they filled the homes with natural gas. When the houses shifted, then the power lines broke loose. The sparks from the power line hit the gas and blew up the homes, like explosions going off. The woman in the house got caught. She couldn't get back out—she went back in to get something. She went up into the attic and was burned over 70 percent of her body. Then she jumped into a tree and hung in a tree for 3 hours to 4 hours until they rescued her. I understand she passed away yesterday.

We have 23 confirmed dead. We thought there were 25 because two people were swept away and reported missing. They found them alive so we are at 23, but we still have 5, 6, or 7 unaccounted for.

The tragedy continues. Love is outpouring from people. First, I thank FEMA. FEMA is there doing an unbelievable job and the National Guard. We are going to depend on the Corps of Engineers. It is going to take everything we have to put our State back together where the people can have some infrastructure. Maybe we can change some streams to the point where they will move differently or water will flow a little differently, hopefully, but this is where you need your Federal Government. The State—no State, the Presiding Officer's beautiful State of Iowa—couldn't do it by itself. We cannot do it by ourselves. I thank FEMA, first responders, and Red Cross. We have everybody in.

If people want to know how they can help, there are people who say: I don't have any money, but I want to come to your State. We need you. We need volunteers who want to work. We need people who have resources who want to help with their money and donations. If they want to send goods, we need that too. We need everything. People have lost everything.

To give you an example, Jim Justice, the owner of the Greenbrier Resort—the Greenbrier is closed indefinitely right now. The big golf tournament that was planned, the Greenbrier Classic, has been cancelled. And the golf

course is pretty much running to a certain extent, but they will come back. So Jim, basically, has opened up the Greenbrier to anybody who is homeless right now—anyone who has lost their home. He said: We will give you a place to stay for free; come to the Greenbrier. We don't have hot water—because of their boiler systems—but we have water. So that is what they are able to do, and he has been so gracious to do that.

I tell people, if they can get on my Web site, [manchin.senate.gov](http://manchin.senate.gov)—at the front of our Web site, you can see everything you can do. It will take you to the site where you can get in contact with the right people to help our State.

Again, I know of the love and compassion people have, and I have watched people come together. Our little State has always taken care of itself. When you ask people “Do you have a place to stay?” they will say “Well, I am staying with my neighbor up here” or they are doing this or that. So that has been fantastic. But the outpouring of love and compassion from around the country has been unbelievable.

We have a lot of famous West Virginians. Brad Paisley has called, and he wants to do a benefit for the State, and that is going to be tremendous. John Kruk and just so many people—so many people have stepped up to the plate.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to say thank you to everybody for reaching out. It is not over. I just called home, and it is raining again. We have flash flood warnings out for the same areas again. But I talked to the weather channel, and we are not supposed to get anywhere near what we got before, so we will be able to handle this, I hope. But it basically just stops the cleanup, and it is devastating to see what has happened.

So I say thank you to all my colleagues and everyone who has sent their heartfelt, sincere condolences for our State and for the people who have lost their lives. That is the first and foremost thing. We can replace everything else, but we can't replace those dear little kids, parents, and grandparents who were lost.

With that, Madam President, I say thank you from the great State of West Virginia, and on behalf of my colleague Senator CAPITO, I thank you very much. We have both been on the trail working together and trying to get all the relief we can, and just keep us in your prayers.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## PUERTO RICO

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, this week the Senate is going to consider legislation dealing with the crisis in Puerto Rico. The legislation before us, the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act, has already passed the House by a vote of 297 to 127. We are taking it up this week because Puerto Rico needs help. They have needed help for quite a while, but now we are running out of time to help that island territory of the United States, with 3.5 million American citizens living there.

Last week, I spoke to the Governor of Puerto Rico, Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla. He explained just how dire the situation is in Puerto Rico.

On July 1, a \$2 billion debt payment is due. That is just a few days from now. There is no way Puerto Rico can make that payment; they don't have the cash. When they don't make that payment, there will be a race to the courthouse to see which hedge fund will sue Puerto Rico first and squeeze out whatever money is left on the island, even if it comes at the expense of the 3.5 million American citizens living there today. Hedge funds have already filed for injunctive relief in the Southern District of New York. In their court documents, they state that they should be paid first in times of scarcity, even ahead of what the government needs for essential services—essential services such as schools, hospitals, law enforcement. In our conversation, the Governor told me that if the hedge funds are granted injunctive relief, then he is not going to be able to pay the salaries of law enforcement and other first responders.

This isn't abstract; this is real. Hospitals have already closed. The Secretary of the Treasury, Jacob Lew, earlier cited in a letter that hospitals can only order dialysis treatments for premature newborns in intensive care. How? Only if they pay cash on demand daily. Let me repeat that. They are so strapped that hospitals can only order the dialysis that is essential for life for premature newborns who are in intensive care—they can only order it if they are paid in cash for that dialysis on a daily basis.

This legislation the House has crafted is certainly not the bill I would have crafted, but it is the only bill we have before us that could get by the tea party element in the House of Representatives. It is not ideal, particularly with regard to the labor provisions in the bill and the way the oversight board is organized.

We will hear bipartisan attacks against the bill in the Senate, well meaning and well felt, but this legislation is needed to get Puerto Rico out of this immediate crisis. Several of us would like to see more in the bill to address the health care disparities in Puerto Rico and the lack of economic growth on the island, but, as Governor Padilla has said, if someone is holding you up at gunpoint and says "Your

wallet or your life," you are going to hand him your wallet because the alternative is worse.

That is where we are. We have to compromise. That is the nature of Congress. That is how the Framers set it up. That is how we get things done. We don't get the perfect, the ideal; we have too many other opinions to consider when we put legislation together.

If we pass this legislation, once we get out of this immediate crisis, then all of us must work as hard as we can to push for solutions for some of the other long-term problems Puerto Rico has. This isn't the end; it is just the beginning. At the same time, we should not look past the achievements in this bill. At the end of the day, this is why this Senator comes down on the side of supporting this legislation. It provides for an orderly process for Puerto Rico to adjust all of its debts, including its general obligation bonds. Those are the bonds held by the hedge funds that are asking for injunctive relief, that they be the ones to get the money first, looking to squeeze the life out of the territory. They are the ones that ran all those ads saying this bill was a bailout. Have you seen those ads? Isn't it interesting that they are the only ones who have the money to run ads saying it is a bailout. Who is paying for the ads? The hedge funds that hold the bonds because they want their money first, to the exclusion of essential services on the island. Well, this is not a bailout. It doesn't spend any taxpayer money. But it has the hedge funds on Wall Street running scared because they know that if this passes, they won't be able to get special treatment and they won't be able to starve Puerto Rico of its vital resources.

Just consider the suffering going on in Puerto Rico. Nearly 200 schools have closed. Public transportation services have been cut. Payments to gasoline suppliers have been delayed, causing vendors to stop supplying gasoline to emergency vehicles like ambulances and fire trucks. Schools have had to cut services to special needs kids. Eighty percent of the businesses in San Juan's main business district have closed.

This isn't something we can continue to debate ad infinitum. Real people are suffering now. Every day we go without providing some sort of relief, more harm is done to the people of Puerto Rico. We are out of time. We need to act. And this bill is the only bill moving. I ask my colleagues to support the bill and send it to the President as soon as possible because, as the Governor said, the alternative is worse.

Might I also add that since this Senator comes from a part of the country—Florida, Central Florida, the Orlando area—where there is such a concentration of citizens who have moved from the island—there is one of the highest concentrations of Puerto Ricans in the United States right in the Orlando area. What is happening is that as the island deteriorates as far as

all of its essential services—doctors can't get paid, the people do not have the essential services for life, the health, welfare, and happiness of people—what is happening is that the professional people are picking up roots and moving to the mainland United States. A good number of them are coming to my State. We are glad to have them, but look what is happening: The very people who will help Puerto Rico come out of this financial and health care crisis—by the way, with Zika piled on top of it, with huge percentages of the population already infected with the Zika virus, that is all the more compounding the problems of the people of the island. This is why we have to act.

I have a letter from the Department of the Treasury to our majority leader—from the Secretary of the Treasury—that outlines some of the island's medical woes, talking about the island's doctors in the neonatal intensive care unit. In order to get the drugs for dialysis, they have to get cash every day in order to deliver those services.

I also have Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla's letter to me, stating why he supports the legislation. I might also say that another Member of the Government—the delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, whom we call Congressman PEDRO PIERLUISI and is of a different party than the Governor—likewise strongly supports this legislation.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD those two letters.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY,

Washington, DC, June 27, 2016.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. LEADER: Puerto Rico is in crisis, and its only hope for recovery and growth is legislation that authorizes the tools necessary for better fiscal management and a sustainable level of debt. Early in June, the House passed a compromise bill, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote, that will give Puerto Rico the tools to recover without any federal spending. The Senate should take up the matter immediately. Delay will only jeopardize the ability of Congress to conclude its work before July 1, a critical deadline Puerto Rico's leadership has publicly highlighted for months.

On July 1—only four days from now—the crisis in Puerto Rico will ratchet up to an even higher level. Puerto Rico has \$2 billion in debt payments coming due that day, including payments on constitutionally prioritized debt on which Puerto Rico has not previously defaulted. In the event of default, and if creditor lawsuits are successful, a judge could immediately order Puerto Rico to pay creditors over essential services such as health, education, and public safety. This could force Puerto Rico to lay off police officers, shut down public transit, or close a hospital. Even a retroactive stay on litigation passed by Congress a few days later would not reverse such a court order. This is one of many reasons Congress must act before July 1. Creditors are hoping to gain the protection of legal judgments as quickly as possible,